



ELSAH HISTORY

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ELSAH'S EARLY STRUCTURES AND STREETSCAPES

The twentieth century saw a slow but persistent change to the streets of Elsie and to the structures that lined those streets and formed patterns and textures on a streetscape that is unique to this community.

This issue of *Elsie History* is dedicated to recapturing and recording some of these earlier scenes through old photographs and the memories of Elsie's older citizens. These photos are from HEF's extensive collection donated over the years by families and friends of Elsie. We always welcome donations of Elsie photographs, of people or of structures, and will be happy to pay for duplication if the donor wishes to keep the original.

The Elsie Museum, located in the Village Hall at 26 LaSalle Street, is presently holding a special exhibit on Elsie's lost structures. The exhibit includes many more photographs than we are able to show in this newsletter, so we encourage you to visit the museum and see the exhibit. The museum is open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. beginning the first weekend in April through the last weekend in October.



A horse and buggy travels down Palm Street toward the village. On the right side of the street (near the horse and buggy) is a pre-Civil War house which still stands and is the home of Mike and Pauline Pitchford. In front is the J. M. Giberson Store at the corner of Palm and LaSalle, which was built in 1870 and burned down in 1924. A front view of the Giberson Store can be seen on page 4. The bungalow house where Nancy McDow lives was later built on the site.

As you can see by these two pictures of Elsie's early streets, they were unpaved and undoubtedly very muddy in wet weather. Upper Mill Street appears to be much broader than it is today.



Barnal Cresswell, brother of HEF Board member, Marie Cresswell, sits in the middle of Mill Street early in the twentieth century. The house to the left is the Ruland house, and in the distant far end is the Cronin house which marks the turn onto Cemetery Road.

The lost structures of Mill Street

Starting at the river and moving north, we begin with the old ice house which is today a ruin owned and maintained by Historic Elsay Foundation. At one time there were at least four additional ice houses in Elsay: 1) at the end of Valley Street (a ruin that was restored by Bill and Mary North); 2) under Mott's Store (now My Just Desserts); 3) at Eliestoun and 4) at Notch Cliff.



The ice house in 1931



The ice house ruin in 2004



Lower Mill Street near the river about 1930, looking north.



The Tonkinson house and outbuildings in 1903 during one of Elsay's many floods. To the immediate left is the back of Peggy Ouder Kirk's home (the Buggy Shop) at 22 Mill Street.



One of Elsay's earlier Post Offices, located on the southwest corner of Mill and Selma Streets. The property is now a green space located on the north side of the Green Tree Inn.



A 1948 photo of a house that once stood at 48 Mill Street, where the Post Office is today.

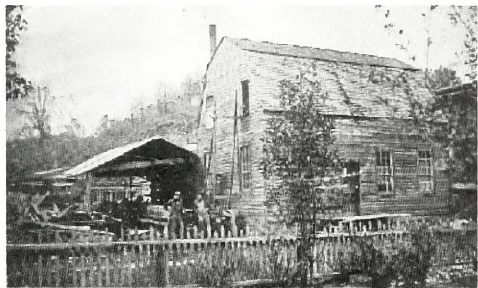
At Mill and Maple, the four-way stop where we now turn to go up the hill toward Principia College, the streetscape is dramatically different from what it was earlier in the twentieth century. The following three pictures show three of the four corners. The fourth (the northwest corner) is where Dr. Benjamin Farley built his home in about 1880. The house still stands.



The southeast corner of Mill and Maple, later the site of the Deck house, which was removed after the flood of 1993. The site is a green space today.



The southwest corner of Mill and Maple in 1903. To the left is the house at 27 Mill where Dan, Stacie and Emma Schaefer currently live. The building to the right is an outbuilding on the property where the garage sits today.



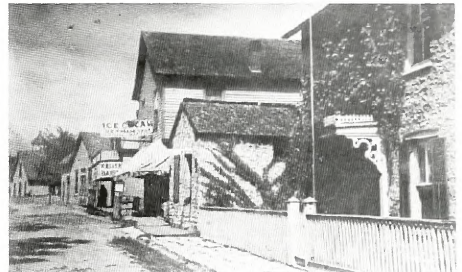
The northeast corner of Mill and Maple where the McNair sawmill was located. The site is a green space today, with a sign directing traffic to Principia College. In 1986 Eric Mack built a replica of this structure as a home on Palm Street, now the residence of the Vandermark family.

The lost structures of LaSalle St.

The interesting thing about LaSalle Street is that it was built on a hillside and the road was terraced using rock walls to make the street level. These rock walls then became the front wall of basements for the structures that were built along the east side of the street.



An early postcard. Paula and Ned Bradley's home is to the right and next to it is Ann and Mark Badasch's home. Both of these houses were built in the late 1850's. On the left is the Apocrypha House, now the restored home of Jim Green. Up the street is Elsay's only Gothic Revival house, built in 1891, now home for Cindy and Steve Ira.



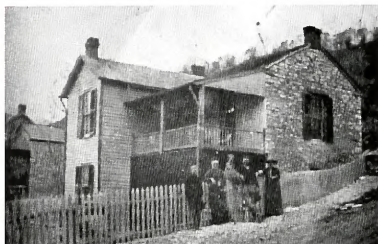
Between the Badasch home (16 LaSalle) and My Just Desserts (18 LaSalle) was once a small building, now gone.



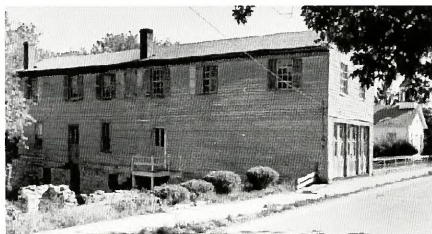
An early streetscape of LaSalle shows a lost building between the Village Hall and the Keller residence, now the home of Dory and Blair Smith.



A 1960's photo showing the gas pump that once existed in front of Ed Keller's home at LaSalle and Alpa.



A picture taken from Alpa Street in 1885 of the building where Jeremiah's-Elsah is now located. The mansard roof we are used to seeing on this building was added in 1891, as was the enclosed porch.



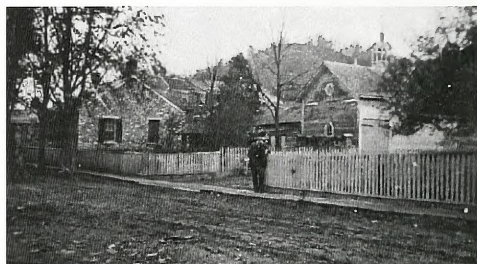
A 1973 photo of the Union Hotel built in 1859. In 1881 it became the home of the McDow family. Nancy McDow, who lives across the street, continued to care for the building until it was partially destroyed by fire on April 1, 2003. The building was then deemed unsafe and was razed later that year.



The Legate house in the 1940s, at the corner of LaSalle and Maple Streets, now a public parking lot. In 1985 Eric Mack built a replica of the house on Palm Street, now the Schreiber home.



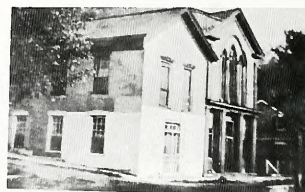
A street scene taken before 1936 looking south toward the river from Selma Street. The house to the left stood next to the Union Hotel. The site is now a green space.



The Loehr house and barn in 1890 at Selma and LaSalle where the Maple Leaf Cottages were later built. The barn has been reproduced by Jerry Taetz between his house and Farley's Music Hall on Mill Street.



Ruin of a house located on the northwest corner of the present public parking lot. This picture is dated 1925. Note Farley's Music Hall to the right in the background.



The Gibson Store, at the corner of LaSalle and Palm Streets, was also a dry goods shop, a hotel, and a post office.

A message from the Board of Historic Elsay Foundation...

A warm welcome to new members: **James Green, Eva G'sell, Yvonne Hayes, Dean Hughes, Genie and Edward Keller, Ruth and Dan Kistler, Nancy McDow, Johnette Perry, Dory and Blair Smith, Linda and Kirk Wilson, and Jan and Jon Wright.**

Thank you for joining, and thank you for your generous support. It is much appreciated.

A very special thank you to two long-time HEF members who each gave a very generous gift of \$1,000: **Helen Sprague** and **David Haslam**, whose gift is in memory of his wife **Gail**.

On average HEF carries about 160 members each year. At this time about half of HEF's members in 2003 have renewed their memberships for 2004. So far, members have joined or renewed in the following categories:

| | | | |
|---------------------|----|-------------------|----|
| Regular (\$10) | 31 | Supporting (\$50) | 22 |
| Contributing (\$15) | 16 | Patron (\$100) | 5 |
| Sustaining (\$25) | 10 | | |

HEF has twenty Life Members. A Life Member is one (or a couple) who has contributed a minimum of \$500, or has been honored for dedicated service over a period of years. HEF Life Members are:

Mr. & Mrs. Christopher (Barbara) Aiken
 Mrs. Eleanor Barnal
 Mrs. Edith Belote
 Ms. Sue Collesler
 Ms. Marie Cresswell
 Mr. & Mrs. Robert (June) Cronin
 Mr. & Mrs. Ed (Phyllis) Hansell
 Mr. & Mrs. Andrew (Margaret) Hyde
 Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert (Betty) Ives
 Mr. & Mrs. Edwin (Judith) Leonard
 Mr. & Mrs. Edward (Jeralyn) Lewitz
 Mr. & Mrs. Al (Ingeborg) Mack
 Mr. & Mrs. W. L. (Marie) Oleson
 Mr. & Mrs. David (Jane) Pfeifer
 The Principia, Office of the Chairman
 Dr. & Mrs. Robert (Sara) Rockabrand
 Ms. Helen Sprague
 Mr. & Mrs. Louis (Alma) Tripidi
 Mr. & Mrs. Bert (Judi) Vandermark
 Dr. & Mrs. Paul O. (Kerry Lynn) Williams

HEF relies heavily on the support of members and friends to keep annual expenses in line with annual income. It may seem to some that cash assets of almost \$75,000 (see table on right) would indicate financial security. However, basic expenses average about \$10,000 a year, and if Farley's needs new paint or other major repairs that figure can more than double.

The table below will give HEF's members and friends an idea of HEF's financial situation. Careful thought is being given to the future of HEF: how best to accomplish its mission and realize its potential for good in this community, and how to use its funds to best advantage.

HISTORIC ELSAH FOUNDATION Financial report for 2003

Checking account: Jersey State Bank
January 1, 2003 **\$10,337.69**

Income:

| | |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Donations | 2,852.06 |
| Memberships | 2,720.00 |
| Sesquicentennial events | 3,000.00 |
| Rental of Farley's | 925.00 |
| Sales of literature | 1,184.62 |
| Interest on checking account | 48.76 |
| Miscellaneous | 540.77 |

Total income **\$11,271.21**
\$21,608.90

Expenses

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Farley's upkeep and care | (8,259.18) |
| Other expenses | (4,001.63) |
| Total expenses | (\$12,260.81) |

The year closed with **\$ 9,348.09**

Assets as of December 31, 2003

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Checking account | \$ 9,348.09 |
| Savings Account | \$43,864.64 |
| Mutual Fund account | <u>\$21,740.74</u> |

Total cash assets **\$74,953.47**

Property (undetermined value)

Farley's Music Hall
 Ice House ruin

✧ Both properties are owned free and clear of any mortgage. Annual property tax for 2003 was \$740.48 for Farley's and \$338.36 for the Ice House ruin.

✧ Historic Elsay Foundation carries no debt.

✧ No salaries are paid to HEF board members or officers. It is all volunteer service.

✧ The cash assets in the savings and mutual fund accounts (initial deposit of \$20,000 and \$40,000 respectively) came from the sale of the Mott Building in 2000.

"Two remarkable young women..."

"You're from Elsay? My, you have two remarkable young women there!"

Ned and I were waiting for the start of a concert in the Spanish Synagogue in Prague. Overhearing the two ladies next to me talking about the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, I chimed in to praise it. There followed the usual "Where are you from?" and then this enthusiastic outburst, realizing that we knew the same fantastic young musicians who reside in Elsay!

The two amazing young women are Erin Schreiber, violin, and Lindsay Garritson, piano, now sixteen. They have been very close friends since the age of three when they met in Suzuki class while studying the violin.

Erin is the daughter of Lynn and Eric Schreiber and big sister of Ben. Lindsay is the youngest daughter of Marie Garritson Jureit, Chair of Principia College's Music Department, and Paul Garritson of St. Louis; she is the youngest sister of Nile, Laura, and Ashley. Both girls are home schooled, although Lindsay attended Principia in St. Louis for nine years.



Erin Schreiber and Lindsay Garritson following their 2003 spring performance at the Sheldon Concert Hall in St. Louis, Missouri

This fall they will be off to college: Erin to the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia where she will study under Jaime Laredo and Pamela Frank; Lindsay to the Hartt School in Hartford, Connecticut where she will be a part of the school's prestigious 20/20 program for exceptional musicians and will study piano with concert artist Luiz de Moura Castro. This marks their first separation.

The careers of these "remarkable young women" are already well established. At the age of eleven they formed the "Spring Duo," performing frequently in the St. Louis area and various parts of the country. (See *Elsah History* #81 regarding their concert in Elsay at Farley's Music Hall.) Both young artists perform as soloists as well.

Erin and Lindsay have both been outstanding members of the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra in which each has served as concert master of this very fine orchestra. As winners of the orchestra's highly competitive concerto competition, each has performed a concerto with the orchestra in Powell Symphony Hall.

As students of Principia College's esteemed carillonneur, Carlo van Ulft, both musicians have passed the demanding national exam to become performing members of the Guild of Carillonneurs of North America (the youngest members ever). Erin also enjoys playing the hammered dulcimer.

Whether as the "Spring Duo" or as soloists, they have performed extensively in our local area, in St. Louis, throughout the country, and around the world.

They've benefited from many master classes with such artists as Msislav Rostropovich and Awadagin Pratt. As members of the Principia College String Quartet, they've had the honor of performing for such dignitaries as President Jimmy Carter and Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Most recently (April 2004) Erin competed in the Yehudi Menuhin International Violin Competition in London. She was one of the youngest performers accepted into the senior level, and one of only 20 selected from the original 190 applicants. She made it to the semi-finals but was unfortunately unable to continue when one of her violin strings unraveled during her performance. What an accomplishment to have made it to the semi-finals in such a field of competitors from around the world — and to finish among the top ten!

Lindsay was one of seven piano finalists to compete in the Music Teacher's National Association national competition in March. Congratulations to both girls in this wonderful level of accomplishment!

When they leave for college, Elsay will miss them greatly. They have been so generous with their musical gifts, we've become spoiled. We like to think that Elsay is a big part of their formation, but their success is truly theirs. We wish them both happy and rewarding years in college and hope they will always keep in touch.

- PAULA BRADLEY

Village Happenings...

One of Historic Elsay Foundation's purposes is the preservation and enhancement of the culture of the Village of Elsay. With Farley's Music Hall — once the center of village life — restored to its former glory, the Foundation encourages, plans, and supports many community activities that make living here so attractive. These activities also show how world-wide in scope these "happenings" are, touching the arts, history and current events.

🍷 **In commemoration of the bi-centennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, My Just Desserts** is sponsoring four Lewis and Clark Heritage Dinners in Farley's Music Hall. The expedition departed from St. Louis in 1804 and its purpose was to explore the approximately 800,000 square miles that the United States purchased from France for the grand sum of \$15,000,000 or about three cents an acre in 1803. The expedition returned to St. Louis in 1806.

March 27 was the first of these Heritage Dinners. On the menu:



As a souvenir of the evening everyone was given a pamphlet containing recipes used in the meal, and snippets from the diaries of the expedition and other sources relating to food of the era.

Bob Metzger, a certified Lewis and Clark Specialist, gave a presentation and displayed numerous artifacts from the era. Dressmaker **Sheila McCormack**, who specializes in period costumes, told about the clothing of the era, and **Lindell Blackford** provided music with his fiddle, authentic to that period of time.

The food was delicious, the program was very interesting, and the setting in Farley's Music Hall was perfect. **Ann Badasch**, the owner of My Just Desserts, has scheduled future dinners for Friday, May 14, and Saturdays, June 26 and July 17. The cost is \$34.95 per person and reservations may be made through My Just Desserts at (618) 374-1607.

🍷 **Elsah has a new family game night** thanks to the wonderful organizing efforts of Cindy Ira. Family and friends of Elsay residents are invited to an evening of fun, food, and fellowship in the Civic Center at 6:00 p.m. on May 8th, June 12th, July 10th and August 14th. The first game night, April 10th, started off with an Easter Egg hunt followed by a pot luck dinner. The cost is \$1.00 per person.

🍷 **Historic Elsay Foundation** hosted a dinner for 14 members of the Hughes family when they gathered together in Elsay on April 9th to celebrate the life of **Mary Elizabeth Hughes**. Later that evening her great nephew, **Dean Hughes**, gave a presentation which was open to the community, on Miss Hughes' life and her work as a dedicated Christian activist for social justice. In 1919 Mary Hughes purchased the house at 11 LaSalle Street and lived there until her passing in 1953. She was known as "Elsah's Bible Lady." The focus of our autumn newsletter will be the story of the family's reunion and the life and times of Mary Hughes.

🍷 **Paul Dixon**, a Major in the United States Army and Commander of Psychological Operations with the 101st Airborne Division, returned from a tour of duty in Iraq on March 23rd. Paul lives in Elsay with his wife **Ruthie**, and two young daughters, **Molly** and **Sophie**. On Wednesday, March 24th, the community celebrated his return with a welcome home party in Farley's Music Hall.



Paul Dixon with his family. The "Welcome Home" sign behind them was made by the second grade class at Principia Lower School, where Sophie is a student, and is made up of many small bits of brightly colored paper.

🍷 Our prayers and best wishes have also been with another Elsay resident who has just returned after serving in Iraq with the Army National Guard. **Sean Meyer** is a Sergeant with the 233rd MPCO in Springfield, Illinois. His wife **Sarah** and their three children, **Megan**, **Zach**, and **Evan** are happy to welcome him home.

Upcoming Activities in the Village of Elsau

Friday, April 2

Museum opens for season
1 to 4 p.m., Friday – Sunday, through October

Saturday, May 1

National Scrapbook Day with Creative Memories consultant, Carol Wolfe. Free hour-long demonstrations at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. To spend the entire day working on your albums, \$20 reserves table space and a box lunch from My Just Desserts. Information: Marie Oleson at 374-1213.
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Farley's Music Hall

Saturdays, May 8, June 12, July 10, August 14

Game night and pot luck dinner for Elsau families and friends. \$1.00 per person.
6:00 p.m. Civic Center

Saturdays, May 15, June 19

Contra Dancing with the Schreibers
Live music by *The Beat Pickers*
\$5 person / \$15 family / ½ price w/student ID
7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. Farley's Music Hall

Saturday, June 19

Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois
Afternoon Tour of Elsau

Thursday, July 1

Last day to submit photographs for the photography exhibit: "Elsah Magic." First place prize will be purchased by the Village of Elsau Museum for \$150. Call 618-374-1568 for information.

Friday, July 16 through Sunday, August 29

Annual Photography Exhibit: "Elsah Magic"
Fridays through Sundays
1:00 to 4:00 Village of Elsau Museum

Sunday, July 25

The Chautauqua Historical Society cordially invites members of the Historic Elsau Foundation to the Chautauqua Platform Lecture. The presenter is Dr. Robert Moore, National Park Service historian who will speak on "Outfitting the Lewis and Clark Expedition." **Reservations are required.** Contact Tim Tomlinson at 618-374-1518 for your reservation(s).

7:00 p.m. Historic Chautauqua Auditorium
New Piasa Chautauqua

Saturday, October 30

Annual Bake Sale fundraiser for the Village of Elsau Museum.
12:00 noon to 4:00p.m. Museum

Welcome...

...to Stan & Ellen Hanold — 12 LaSalle Street
...to Rick Matson — 138 Mill Street
...to Kim & Shawn Sherman — 128 Cemetery Road
...to Courtney Barnett — 122A Cemetery Road

and Farewell...

...to Eric Becker — 128 Cemetery Road
...to David Helmer — 6A Palm Street

and a move within the Village...

...Pauline and Mike Pitchford from 12 LaSalle Street to 4 Palm Street

Historic Elsau Foundation Board:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| President | Marie Oleson |
| Vice President | Inge Mack |
| Secretary | Kim Crocker |
| Treasurer | Jeanne Shultz |
| Board members: | |
| Ann Badasch | Mary Anne Schmidt |
| Paula Bradley | Carol Stookey |
| Marie Cresswell | Gerald Tactz |
| Jeralyn Lewitz | Tim Tomlinson |

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Subscription is with membership. Editor: Marie Oleson

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|-------------------|-----------------|
| Memberships: | |
| Regular \$10 | Supporting \$50 |
| Contributing \$15 | Patron \$100 |
| Sustaining \$25 | Life \$500 |

Please send memberships or letters to the editor to:
P.O. Box 117, Elsau, IL 62028
Phone: 618-374-1059

The purposes of Historic Elsau Foundation are stated in the Articles of Incorporation (1971):

"...the preservation and enhancement of the historic buildings, houses, architecture and culture of the Village of Elsau, Illinois, the historic areas, the publication of historical brochures, pamphlets, and periodicals regarding the Village, and the establishment of an educational program to inform the general public of the historical and educational value of the Village."